

The 2013 Egyptian Coup and Its Influence on the Sustainability of Peace In Palestine

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Abstract

This paper will discuss the relations of the 2013 Egyptian coup to the Sustainability of Peace in Palestine. Both issues have become critical events in the study of Islamic Worlds issues, especially in the Middle East. To answer the question, the research was conducted by the method of literature study. As a result, it was found that the Egyptian coup in 2013 had a strong influence to worsen the peace in Palestine. It could be seen through the escalating intensity of the conflict, the weakening position of Hamas which resisted for a long time against the existence of Israel and the strengthening position of Israel in dealing with Palestinian independence movement. It happened because the coup was not only a domestic issue anymore, but it also has become an International issue due to the intervention of various external powers especially America and Israel. The main reason for this intervention was to secure the position of Israel in the region.

Keywords: Coup Palestine, Sustainability, Egypt, Intervention, of Peace

1. Introduction

On July 3rd, 2013, the position of Mursi as Egypt president was seized by the Egypt military led by Gen Abdul Fatah Sisi who then announced Adly Mansour as the interim president of Egypt before the election conducted. This issue is exciting to be discussed since the coup happened only one year after the fall of Husni Mubarak supported by the military who had led Egypt for around 30 years. Unfortunately, his influential position was distracted by the democratisation wave in the Middle East called the Arab spring.

By September 11th 2011, Husni Mubarak's position ended after 18 big waves of a demonstration by the Egyptians. Then, the people conducted a democratic election to choose their leader from which Ikhwanul Muslimin and another Islamic group emerged as the winner. For such condition, the support of people toward Mursi as the Islamic elite was so intense. Some of the Islamic groups even had many hopes for a better condition of Egypt especially regarding the strengthening position of particular Islamic groups. Some policies had shown that Mursi attempted to do such intention, which then provoked more controversial debates.

Some of those policies were the replacement of the military elites who were close to Mubarak, the declaration of a new constitution indicating the tendency to Islamize Egypt on November 22nd, 2012, and his support towards the position of Palestine. In the point of view of

the opposition groups, those policies of Mursi did not show the spirit of fairness and did not adequately accommodate the entire people's voices.

The situation eventually led to domestic political instability in Egypt and became the reason for the opposition groups to invite the people in seizing power from Mursi. On the other hand, the supporters of Mursi also went to the street to support his position. Then, the clash between those two groups occurred and casualties recorded during that period. Moreover, this circumstance had begun the banning of Ikhwanul Muslimin's existence in Egypt.

Surprisingly, this coup was not only because of the domestic problem in Egypt, but also due to the support from external power such as Shi'i movement, and at least five other countries, mainly Israel [1]. Other resources also mentioned that America supported this coup by the commitment of Egypt toward the Camp David agreement in 1978 [2]. Moreover, the American senator Mark Kirk said in his speech that the coup should be done because the Islamic government of Egypt under Mursi will prevent weapon supply from Egypt to Hamas [3].

Based on that condition, this paper aims to understand how the Egyptian coup in 2013 influenced the sustainability of peace in Palestine? This question emerged because of the intervention of America and Israel in order to overthrow the Mursi government which supported the existence of Palestine, though logically, *coup de etat* on a country should be done due to domestic issues. This condition has brought curiosity to find the relation between the issues.

2. Methods

In order to answer the question of this research, the literature review method was used. The researcher collected some information and documents regarding both of the Egyptian coup and the sustainability of peace in Palestine. Those materials which consist of primary and secondary resources were analysed using the domino effect theory. It means that there were some steps done in this research such as finding the form of both issues correlations, describing each issue, and finally analysing and correlating the issues through a descriptive method.

To find the logic of the research, the domino effect theory used in this paper was introduced by Peter T Leeson. In his collaborative writing with Andrea M Dean, he mentioned that the development of politics such as democracy in a particular country would influence the increasing and decrease of democracy in its regional [4]. This research used the same formula as what was used by Dwight Eisenhower when he was explaining the alliance of America and the Soviet Union in the cold war era. However, in his paper, Peter T Leeson mostly used his theory to analyse the effect of the Iraq war towards Middle East regionalism. In his notion, he explained that America invaded Iraq as the heart of the region in 2003 in order to capture more or even the entire region of the Middle East.

In this paper, that domino effect theory was used to analyse the influence of the coup in Egypt on the peace in Palestine. Thus, it is also essential to understand the concept of the coup itself. Nicolay Marinov defined that coup is the effort of the military to capture the governmental power for the incapability of civilian government in facing and solving various problems. Through in the military often claimed that the political stability would come in post-coup, in

reality, there is no guarantee since the interests of various groups including from the foreign countries are also strong [5].

3. Result and Discussion

Based on the problems and the methods I explained above, first of all, this paper will discuss the historical chronology of the Egyptian coup. Then, the influence of the Egyptian coup toward the sustainability of peace in Palestine will be explained. Before concluding, the reason and explanation of the influence by using the strategic correlation of both issues in term of ideology and intervening groups also would be elaborated.

3.1. The Historical Chronology of Egyptian Coup

The seizing on Mursi's regime in Egyptian politics was the result of domestic political instability. This condition was the continuity of Arab spring which had profoundly influenced many Middle Eastern regions including Egypt and Palestine. With the waves of democratisation, the people also demanded the changing of power in Egypt under the ruling of Husni Mubarak. The opportunity has helped the Islamic group to come to power. If during the governance of Husni Mubarak, Ikhwanul Muslimin was banned, the fall of Mubarak gave the opportunity to Ikhwanul Muslimin to replace the secular and military groups in the politics [6].

The hopes of the majority Muslim people increased dramatically. Unfortunately, it happened only for a short time since Mursi faced numerous domestic issues which need to be solved elegantly. There were poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and political instability. Even some data showed that the economic condition of Egypt at that time was not good. The GDP of Egypt even had not reached 2%, while the foreign exchange rates also collapsed [7]. The number of poor people also increased to 50% of the population or around 40 million people, unemployment reached 12% of the population, not including the declining of investment and foreign currencies [8].

In order to find the best solution, Mursi started to produce some controversial policies such as changing several military elites who had allied with Husni Mubarak, empowering the civil society, and Islamization of the Egyptian constitution. In his opinion, the economic problems suffered by the people were the product of systemic issues related to some policies he had produced. However, such a notion had made Mursi more difficult in deciding his policy and position because what people needed was the fast and instant solution.

Such circumstance invited the supporters of Husni Mubarak and the opposition of Mursi who were still active to conduct protest toward Mursi and to seize his power. They worked together and gained help from external actors. Therefore, the Egyptian coup could be said as something very systematic and well planned. The coup had been arranged by anti-Mursi groups more than one year before the coup itself. It indicated that both domestic and International interests to remove Mursi's position were quite robust. In term of domestic interests, some opposition groups such as Syiah, liberal, Coptic Christian, military and other Mubarak supporters have intensively allied to overthrow Mursi. On the other hand, America had considerable interests in the coup toward Mursi.

Such interests could be seen through the speech of Mac Kirk when he argued on the importance of American intervention in Egyptian politics. He said that there is no guarantee for the safety of American interests as long as Egypt was ruled under Islamic group regime. Furthermore, he mentioned that there were many issues which American should concern about, such as the preventing weapon supply to Gaza, and keep the sustainability of intelligence sharing between the two countries.

From that speech, the most important one related to this topic is the indication of strong relations between the Islamic group which has ruled Egypt and the political stability of Israel and Palestine. Thus, when America decided to intervene on the Egyptian politics, it could be realised that the fall of Mursi would have a substantial influence on the stability of Palestinian politics.

In other words, it can be said that the primary interest of America was to protect and help the position of Israel as her ally [9]. In her perspective, Israel has a very strategic position in American foreign policy, especially in the Middle East region. If Israel is secure, then the stability of the region will not be reached. It means that America has the opportunity to intervene and to show her power. In term of economic interests, America also can sell her weapons and collaborate with a particular country to secure the oil mining fields which are very important for her national development.

Consequently, with the simple logic in analysing the Palestinian issue, we can say that the stronger Israel is, the more negative impacts will come to Palestine. That is why some notions explained that the reemergence of military power in Egypt to overthrow Mursi would weaken the position of Palestine [10].

Although America and Israel supported the Egyptian coup toward Mursi, politically they played beautifully. In many forums, Obama always said that America had no relations with the coup toward Mursi. However, it could be understood as the branding of America for its commitment towards democratisation.

Hence, in the process of seizing power from Mursi, America gave financial support to the opposition groups. In his writing entitled, Emad Mikay investigated that through the collaboration with NGO, liberal groups and Coptic Christian, America spent much money to snatch Mursi's power [11].

Though the effect of these activities resulted in the clash among the people and increased casualties by December 2012, their position was strong since they were known to be successful in lobbying Washington. For America, it is highly beneficial, since she also had the same interest as the opposition groups so that they could collaborate with each other. Despite giving the financial supports, America also made an effort to brand the protest attempted to overthrow Mursi to be not called as a coup.

Under this well-organised and systematic framework, the opposition groups were able to mobilise the people. Eventually, the media which mostly supporting their side published news globally stating that most of the people were disappointed with the leadership of Mursi. By this public opinion building, they could claim that the coup conducted by the military under an unstable condition of political development of Egypt was legal and was attempted to save the future of Egypt.

The reality showed that the notion was true since not long time after various rallies involving Egyptian people to criticise Mursi's policies, the Egyptian military had found the opportunity to intervene and take over the power from Mursi. It was Gen Abdul Fatah, one of Mursi's ministers, who led the coup to grab the power since he was the closest person to Husni Mubarak. After handing the power to Adly Mansour as the interim president, finally, he became the President of Egypt legally through the election process after the coup [12].

For the supporters of Mursi, this condition showed manipulation from the military and the people of Mubarak to return the power to their side. In order to do so, they conducted numerous protests to demand a real democratic process and to ask the power back from Mursi to Mubarak's side. On the other hand, the opposition sides felt that what they were doing by counting Mursi was right to protect Egypt, since Ikhwanul Muslim as the supporter base of Mursi has failed in various issues such as politics, ideology, and organisation [13].

As a result, political instability in Egypt emerged, and the people felt insecure in their own country, especially those who actively participated in Ikhwanul Muslimin. They much more concerned about their freedom and had no power any more to give more attention to Hamas people in Palestine.

3.2. The Evidence Showing Worsened Stability in Palestine after the Egyptian Coup

The complexity in domestic politics of Egypt has significantly influenced the sustainability of peace in Palestine. Finally, the peaceful condition was worsened as could be seen through the increasing of conflict intensity and the weakening position of Hamas.

3.2.1. The intensity of the Conflict Escalation

The Palestinian issue has emerged as the central problem of the Middle East region. The high number of casualties due to the conflict between Israel and Palestine had become a humanitarian issue where hundred thousands of people were killed, the infrastructures and public facilities such as mosques, schools, and hospitals were damaged. The data even showed that Israel arrested more than 600 thousands of Palestinian people, and more than 4,6 million Palestinians turned to be refugees, not including the psychological and socio-economical impacts of the conflicts [14].

The reality showed how difficult the life of Palestinian people is. There had stayed in Palestine for more than 1.300 years since the era of Umar bin Khattab under peaceful condition. However, since the Jews planned to "return" to this land at the end of 19th century, the instability started to appear. After that, it became a severe problem when the Jews declared Israel as a state on the land of Palestine in 1948. Formerly, in 1917 British supported the establishment of Israel through the Balfour Declaration [15].

For such action, the Jews have made a historical claim, and an ideological perspective that they are the chosen people, and the land of Palestine is the "promised land" for them. They claimed that they are the sons of prophets who had lived in this land for thousands of years ago, especially of the prophet Sulaiman who used to have a tremendously big kingdom during his

time in the past. Thereof, their return to the so-called “promised land” is aimed to reemerge the glory of the prophethood.

This notion was not admitted among the Arabians and Muslim people. For the Arabians, they are the people who have the rights to stay in Palestine land. The same position was expressed by the Muslim who viewed that the claim of Jews showed their arrogance.

Progressively, the position of the Muslim and Arabian people was not strong enough to encounter the power of Israel. Since 1948, several wars had taken place between Arab countries led by Egypt and Israel supported by America and the UK. Unfortunately, in each war, the Arab countries were failed even lost a lot of their soldiers, planes, and land. For instance in the case of Egypt, after six days war 1967, Anwar Saddat said that Egypt had lost more than 10.000 soldiers, 101 planes, and part of their region in Sinai. Such condition happened because the Arabian countries have a problem to cooperate in facing Israel.

To such condition, he preferred to go diplomatic way in solving the problems with Israel. On the other side, even though Israel won some wars but Menachem Begin as the prime minister of Israel in that time viewed that diplomatic way was the cheapest method and could minimise the victims in Israel side. Moreover, he believed that if Israel could collaborate with Egypt, then all of the wars with the Arabian people would be ended since Egypt was the most powerful country in the region at that time. This condition would benefit Israel and America significantly.

With these two mutual notions, America under the government of Jimmy Charter had facilitated the peace agreement between two countries in Camp David in 1978. Therefore, Israel would withdraw all its military forces and settlements in Sinai and return the land to Egypt. As the reciprocal consequence, Egypt would recognise the existence of Israel as a state [16].

Under this agreement which was continued by Husni Mubarak for 30 years, Egypt became the close ally of Israel, which automatically made the position of Palestine became difficult. Unlike in the era of Nasser, Palestine had no support at all from the government of Husni Mubarak. That is why with the fall of Mubarak during the Arab spring, the hope for a better life of Palestine people have blossomed. The feeling had become stronger because the Egyptian democratisation had given the opportunity to the Islamic groups, mainly from Ikhwanul Muslimin to lead this country.

Unfortunately, the position of Mursi was snatched by the military only one year after he came to power. This condition affected the sustainability of peace in Palestine which after that declined significantly. The military and the supporters of Husni Mubarak returned to power which shifted the policy of Egypt towards Palestine. The attack of Israel could see the insecure stability of Palestine for one month during Ramadhan in 2014.

In that attack, Israel did not take into account religion and how Muslim people of Palestine need security to enjoy their praying in Ramadhan month. While praying, there were a lot of Palestinians were bombed, while the rest were arrested. Moreover, this attack also caused damages to infrastructure, as well as psychological problems among the people especially children and women.

In this current time, we also procured information that Israel is continuing their military operation, even starting to penetrate the location of Al-Aqsa mosque as the holy site of Muslim

people. It indicated that the political stability of Palestine has worsened compared to the era of Mursi.

3.2.1. The Weakening Position of Hamas

The hope for a better life rose after the president-elect Mursi to be the President of Egypt supported by the Islamic groups, especially Ikhwanul Muslimin as explained above which have a similar ideology with Hamas in Palestine. Hamas is the branch of Ikwanul Muslimin since this organisation has become a transnational movement in Islamic political issues. It came to Palestine by the dogma and belief that the problems of every single part of the Islamic world are the problems of all Muslim in the entire world. That is the profound meaning of brotherhood as the meaning behind the name of this organisation “Muslim Brotherhood”.

As the cadre of Ikhwanul Muslimin and supported by this group, Mursi showed his support to Palestine by opening the border between Egypt and Palestine. This policy gave more space to the Palestinians to enjoy their life and get assistance from other countries or even from the Egyptians themselves.

However, then, after the coup toward Mursi such expectation and opportunity for a better life of Palestinian people had vanished and their living condition turned to be more difficult. After Mursi lost his power, Israel attacked the people directly for one month entirely during Ramadhan last year. Their soldiers even killed and bombed the people while they were performing Tarawih prayer in the mosque.

The new military Egyptian government also decided to close the Egypt Palestine border. It made Hamas lost their power and support. This policy also did not gain significant attention from the international world because Hamas itself has been categorised as one of the international terrorism links [17].

This fact has made a good point for Israel while being a massive problem for the Palestinian people to gain their freedom. Moreover, Israel did not seem satisfied enough only by getting this benefit, but it also used the separation and conflict between Hamas and Fatah. Whenever Hamas had chances to re-attack Israeli soldiers, they gained no support from the Islamic world. It seemed like they see the war between Palestine and Israel as a daily issue which does not need to be concerned. Regarding weapons, the attacks toward Israeli soldiers also did not give significant impact to strengthen Palestine’s position.

3.3. How had the 2013 Egyptian coup Influenced the Palestinian Issues?

From the above explanation, it is clear that the coup toward Mursi’s power by the military regime had given significant impact on the worsening of peace in Palestine. This reality could be understood by the analysing some of this following things:

3.3.1. Strong Relations between Egypt and Palestine

Geopolitically and culturally, Egypt and Palestine are very close. In term of geopolitics, the southern part of Palestine, especially Gaza is currently bordering with Sinai, Egypt. Meanwhile, the other sides of Palestine are bordering with Israel. Hoping for the peace with

Israel is not a rational hope of this country, so the remaining hope is only for the excellent regime and attention from Egypt.

This reason also had the historical basis of which in a previous time when Nasser led Egypt, this country led another Arabic country to fight against Israel. For such purpose, he declared Pan Arabism in which the primary goal was to liberate Palestine from the colonialism of Israel.

Unfortunately, the history has been shifted, and for a long time, Egypt was under the stage of enmity with Palestine. The other Arabic or Islamic countries also found difficulties whenever they wanted to help this prophet country. The hope was if an Islamic group or anti-Israel leadership led Egypt.

Meanwhile, during the post-Mursi time, the foreign policy of Egypt, especially regarding Palestine was the restoration of Mubarak policies. Some scholars argued that it is the revival era of the old guards where the authoritarian regime under military was reemerged, the business was handled by elites, and public opinion was split, manipulated, and marginalised [18].

3.3.2. External Intervention: America and Israel

The severe other logic which needs to be understood regarding this issue is the enormous interests of America in the Middle East Region. For America, the Middle East is not only rich in term of oil, but this country also is the centre of the three “same” religions consist of Islam, Christian and Jew. If the centre of those religions could be captured, the civilisation of the world can be controlled easily.

Moreover, in term of geopolitics, the Middle East is the border between the west and the east, as well as between the south and the north. Since America can capture this region, it will not be challenging to reach Asia, Europe and Africa. It means that if America can handle this region, America will be able to control the world.

This notion has affected the majority of American foreign policies of which America was seen as a highly sensitive country which is always interested to be involved in various issues of the Middle East. That is why in each single issues like the coup in Egypt or the conflict of Israel-Palestine America would take part in support of its interest. Sometimes in order to protect her interests and brand herself as a democratic country, America would not openly show her position. Such condition happened in the case of the Egyptian coup.

4. Conclusion

After doing this research, it can be concluded that there is a healthy relationship between the coup toward Mursi and the declining of sustainability of peace in Palestine. Because of the 2013 coup, the peace in Palestine was worsened. It happened because America which strongly supports its ally, Israel, had conducted double standard policies in the Egyptian coup. On one side, Obama stated that America had no relations and was not involved in the coup of Egypt, but on the other hand, abundant evidence showed its support for the coup toward Mursi.

It happened because America has many interests for the military and secular regime in Egypt and felt insecure for its interests under Islamic leadership of Mursi. One of the primary

interests of America was to save the position of Israel and to prevent the infiltration of weapon to Hamas through Egypt. Thus, the power of Israel would be stronger, and on the other side, the condition will be more difficult for Palestine in order to sustain its peace. Ironically, the insecure position of Palestine became worse when the Palestine Israel conflict has become a central issue in the Middle East.

Based on the condition, it can be concluded that the return of military in the Egyptian politics has weakened the position of Palestine. The future of this country is absurd. Furthermore, the support of Islamic world toward the Palestinian movement also has become more difficult, like what has been depicted that Hamas hardly gained support from Ikhwaul Muslim, as it was not recognised as a legal organisation in Egypt. The other Islamic countries are also too busy with other issues either their domestic problems or regional problems, such as Syria and Yaman conflict in the Middle East. At the same time, Israel has found its old friend, Egypt under military power, to increase its position and to secure its interests in the region.

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